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SUBJECT: SOUTHEAST TURKEY PRESS SUMMARY FOR MAY 23, 2006

This is the Southeastern Turkey press summary for May 23, 2006. Please note that Turkish press reports often contain errors or exaggerations; AmConsulate Adana does not vouch for the accuracy of the reports summarized here.

POLITICAL, SECURITY, HUMAN RIGHTS

YENI SAFAK / OZGUR GUNDEM: Forty-four foreign nationals, who have entered the country illegally and who were being trafficked, were caught in a truck in Van's Gurpinar district. Twenty-six of them were Afghanis, 15 of them were Bangladeshis, 3 of them were Pakistanis. Yeni Safak daily further reports that Ministry of Interior started scrutinizing the issue of human trafficking, terrorism, internal displacement and prostitution.

ZAMAN / BOLGE / OZGUR GUNDEM: Traffic police have imposed fines on four drivers in Adana who were carrying construction workers in the cargo section of the trucks in the last three days.

CUMHURIYET / YENI SAFAK / OZGUR GUNDEM: Deputy Chief of Afghan Embassy in Turkey said that the identity cards of the Afghani nationals who were killed in an accident on Friday (05/19) in Osmaniye (see press summary 05/22) were seized by the human traffickers; a situation which made it difficult to identify the victims.

ZAMAN / BOLGE: Provincial Chairperson of AKP (Justice and Development Party) paid a courtesy visit to the Adana Governor.

OZGUR GUNDEM: The Turkish Supreme Court's objection against the co-chairmanship concept introduced by DTP has caused heated controversy within party ranks. The party's Central Executive Board has tended to act in accordance with the prescription of the Supreme Court, however, DTP's women's branch has been showing strong objection to annulment of co-chairmanship. (This summary is from 05/20 edition.)

RADIKAL: Diyarbakir Prosecutor's Office, pointing to DTP Siirt Provincial Chairperson Murat Avci's lawsuit, demanded that DTP be closed. Murat Avci made his March 29 remarks in Siirt where he allegedly incited people to protest action during the violent protests in Diyarbakir in late March.

HURRIYET / ZAMAN / RADIKAL / CUMHURIYET: Two separate remote controlled mines killed one commissioned officer and wounded two privates in separate incidents in Diyarbakir and Van.

OZGUR GUNDEM: The daily claimed that 10 soldiers have died in the last two days in military operations going on in Bingol and Diyarbakir's Lice district. Separately, a private has reportedly been wounded because of an explosion that took place when a military vehicle was passing along a road in Van's Baskale district.

OZGUR GUNDEM: The rivalry between DTP and AKP in Van turned into a demonstration of power between the two parties' congresses that were held on May 19 and May 21 respectively in Van. Both parties attempted to strengthen their position: AKP, frustrated about Diyarbakir, shifted its concentrated efforts in Van, and DTP, frustrated in mayoral elections in Van was trying to strengthen its position there (05/18 edition). Thousands of people reportedly welcomed the DTP Co-Chairpersons when they arrived at Van for the first congress of DTP to be held in Van. Co-Chairpersons Ahmet Turk and Aysel Tugluk, who wanted to visit Bostanici district municipality after their visit to DTP office in Van, were denied entrance to the municipality by Jandarma when the delegation refused to be searched. DTP delegation and Bostanici Mayor protested the search attempt and quit the scene, the crowd of people applauded to protest the actions by the Jandarma, and the Mayor of the Bostanici Municipality said that the search attempt by the Jandarma was unlawful (05/20 edition).

DTP Co-Chairperson Ahmet Turk urged PM Erdogan to see them as counterparts of the Kurdish issue during the DTP congress held in Van on May 20. People chanted slogans saying, "PKK is made up of people. And those people are now here" during the congress. People also chanted slogans in support of terrorist leader Abdullah Ocalan. Van Mayor (from AKP) sent flowers to the DTP congress (05/21 edition).

OZGUR GUNDEM: A group comprised of members of Human Rights Association and Socialist Platform of the Oppressed People staged a protest activity in Adana to mark the International Week for People Who Disappeared Under Detention (May 17-31).

OZGUR GUNDEM: Threatening letters have been sent to 18 muhtars (headmen) of the villages in Van's Gulpinar district from unknown sources in Hatay. The headmen are from a section of Gulpinar which was evacuated in 1990s on grounds that people

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did not agree to become village guards. For about a month, the displaced people were returning to their villages there. Reportedly, security officers from Van Command seized the letters.

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